

# STOREFRONT

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**UPSTAIRS DOWN:**

The Pit, The Tower, The Terrace-Plateau

**Peter Noever**

Exhibition Schedule: Jan. 15-Feb. 26, 1994

Gallery Hours: Tue-Sat 12-6 pm

Opening Reception: Jan 15, 6-8 PM

Address: 97 Kenmare, (corner of Lafayette St.)

Peter Noever, designer, director of Austrian Museum for Applied Art: MAK (Österreichischen Museums für angewandte Kunst) in Vienna, and the chief editor of architectural magazine UMRIS, will present his recent and on-going projects in an exhibition called Upstairs Down: the Pit, the Tower, the Terrace-Plateau. His first in New York, the exhibition will be centered on various building projects on a site in Burgenland (Breitenbrunn), Austria, where the Pit, the Tower and other works are located, and the Terrace-Plateau, which is on the grounds of MAK in Vienna. This will also be the first exhibition within the collaborative building project by Vito Acconci and Steven Holl, which has physically transformed Storefront.

In a rather pastoral site near Burgenland, Peter Noever has built a series of works that began with the renovation of an existing 200 year old wine cellar (1971). After covering the vaulted roof of the wine cellar with grass, he then excavated a round and open space, called the "Pit," at the rear of the wine cellar (1972/73). He then built the "Quarry Passageway" (Steinbruch-Gang), a 65 m long and 3.5 m straight trench that connects the "Pit" and a quarry that exists at the far end of the site (1980/81). This stage of construction also included the "Quarry-Stair Construction" (Steinbruch-Stiegenanlage), leading down to the quarry 15 m lower, and the "Wing-Stair Elements" (Flügel-Treppen-Elemente) that bisects "Quarry-Stair Construction." The "Wing-Stair Elements" leads up from the "Quarry Passageway" up to the general ground level of the site from where everything was excavated.

Through these excavations, Noever connects the three main levels of this site: ground level, the floor of the "Pit," the wine cellar, and the quarry. His passageways, stairs and spaces integrate the site to create an architecture by landscape. The result is an antidote to the disparity between the practice of architecture, landscape architecture and art, and displays the great potential from the integration of these disciplines that command the making of our built environment

Once the existing elements and levels are connected below ground, Noever then builds from ground up. In 1982/83 the "Toilet with Concrete Plateau" (Klosett mit Beton-Plateau) was built to house two without-flush toilets and a wash basin. The "Wood-Plateau" (Holz-Plateau), a massive footbridge-like timber construction, was constructed 0.5 m above the ground level as a platform to view the site (1986). The "36 Concrete Rocks" (36 Beton-Steine), originally made for the exhibition Land in Sicht," in Mucsarnok, Budapest (1989), to project the architectural rhythm of the museum into its front courtyard, was later transported and placed inside the quarry (1990). His most recent project is "Cube 37" (completed in November 1993), a two story residence with underground tunnel to the "Pit." The next building project will be the "Tower," a 25 meter high observation tower that was designed in 1990/91. With each construction, Noever now goes higher and higher.

While in Vienna, Noever directs a museum but, in Burgenland, he is building a museum. Here there is no curator, no directors and no supporters to contend with, only himself. The collection of this museum is made and owned by Peter Noever, a radical idea to make, show and collect his life's work in one place. A philanthropy to himself.

The result is an architecture in solitude, a labyrinth which traps time. Roofed by heaven, most of it is hidden or firm to the ground. Here architecture restrains, not dominates, the embryonic urge of the earth. A Stonehenge relived, humans are reduced and below the universe. Solemnity travels throughout this place, which has no skin, so air and earth can flow unfiltered and undivided. Light falls fresh and rests sharp on its white-washed concrete walls and spaces. Celebrated are what's there and what falls there. Light is denied and shaped, like wine and stones from there will.

'The Terrace Plateau,' an elevated platform at the end of MAK's courtyard, is Noever's pedestal to showcase experimental architecture. The proposals from Raimund Abraham, Coop Himmelblau, Günther Domenig, Mark Mack, Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, Helmut Richter, Michael Sorkin and Lebbeus Woods would make it the first proscenium for architecture. It would be a monumental victory, for experimental architecture, if realized. The idea of a museum exhibiting buildings or having a collection of buildings on site is a radical one, and the same as what Noever does in Burgenland and the collaborative building project by Vito Acconci and Steven Holl at StoreFront.



Noever's vision and work are everywhere in MAK. The spaces that house its collections were designed by Günther Forg, Donald Judd, Franz Graf, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Bloom, Eichinger oder Knechtel, Heimo Zobernig, Manfred Wakolbinger, Gang Art and Peter Noever, each creating different interpretation on space for art. James Wines did an installation at the entrance to the bookstore, and the major exhibition for the reopening was "The Renovation of the Renovated MAK" by Vito Acconci who spatially upended a major part of the museum. Together, they realize Noever's ambition to make Vienna an international center for art and architecture once again. In many ways the confrontation of the old MAK and the new "Terraced Plateau" is the portrait of Peter Noever's double life; a public figure in Vienna and a solitary worker in Burgenland.

An handsome catalogue on Noever's work will be available during the exhibition. The catalogue will include texts from Kyong Park, Michael Sorkin and Gabriele Petricek, and statements from Bernard Rudofsky, Carlo Scarpa, Günther Feuerstein, Friedrich Achleitner.  
40pp. 11 x 16.5. illustrations: 20 b/w, 50 color

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## UPSTAIRS DOWN: Peter Noever

Hidden in Breitenbrunn is an architecture in solitude, a labyrinth that stills the time. Roofed by heaven and visually decapitating the outside, it is a very stoic place. A reclusion from loud and pompous, most of it is hidden or rooted to the horizon. Here architecture restrains, not dominate, the embryonic urge of the earth. A Stonehenge relived, human are reduced and below to the universe.

The old wine cellar and abandoned quarry are where everything began. Solemnity is universal and travels throughout this place with no skin. Air and earth flow unfiltered and undivided here. Light fall fresh and rest sharp on its white-washed concrete walls and spaces. Celebrated are what's there and what falls there. Light is denied and shaped, like wine and stones from there will.

But this is where Zen meets Godzilla. 'The Toilet with Concrete Plateau' (82/83) is like a bunker of meditation. 'The Toilet,' with its long sloping roof, recalls the stair that winds into the belly of an intercontinental ballistic missile silo. The light that pierce through its narrow and horizontal slit feels almost radioactive. In this dark cavern, the concrete toilets without flush virtualizes a post-nuclear living. Shit then would be a ritual of life.

The grided field of '36 Concrete Rocks,' each weighing 3.5 tons, seem too sardonic to seat. The loudspeakers inside further its entrapment. Something alive may be inside. Something big could be above them. They too look radioactive, as they reminds me the abandoned nuclear power plants that are everywhere. May be the nuclear fuels spent are inside.

'The Tower,' with its long vertical ladder inside, look so much like a missile silo cut in half. The round excavation that made 'The Pit' could be a bomb site softened by time. The trenched 'Quarry Passageway,' and the tunnel that shoots from recently completed 'The Cube,' all bring my military and religious readings, which I suspect were not in his mind.

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The monumentality of Noever's vision and work are everywhere in MAK. The spaces that house its collections were designed by Gunther Forg, Donald Judd, Franz Graf, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Bloom, Eichinger Oder Knechtel, Heimo Zobernig, Manfred Wakolbinger, Gang Art and Peter Noever himself. James Wines did an installation at the entrance to the bookstore, and the major exhibition for the reopening was "The Renovation of the Renovated Mak" by Vito Acconci who spatially upended a major part of the museum. Together, they give Noever's ambition to make Vienna an international center for art and architecture once again.



In many ways the confrontation of the old MAK and the new Terraced Plateau is  
a the portrait of ~~Peter~~ Noever's double life; a public figure in Vienna and a solitary  
worker in Breitenbrunn. In a world, where most of us contends with the  
limitations and constrictions that are bestowed upon us, Noever rather constructs  
his own.

**Kyong Park**

December 16, 1993

2 GLASS ELEMENTS 1 GLASS ELEMENT

63cm x 225cm

178 x 225cm

26'-8"  
8.13M

4 GLASS ELEMENTS 77cm x 225cm

4 STK 77/225  
n = 15

77

251K 63/225

1ST L 148/225

ALL HEAVY ABOVE

8'-1"

2.46M

RECEPTION AREA

3'-4"

1.01M

TOILET

TABLE

4'-11"

2'-4"

0'-1"

4'-0"

1.22M

1'-2"

0.38M

13'-1"

4.0M

10'-7"

3.23M

6'-9"

2.06M

EXHIBITION INSTALLATION: PETER NOEVER

48' 8 1/2"  
14.63M

DISTANCE: 15cm

22 GLASS ELEMENTS SET 45cm x 22.5cm

22 STK 45/22.5  
a = 15

16' 1 1/2"  
5.06M

21' 0"  
6.4M

13' 3"  
4.04M

7' 1 1/4"  
2.17M

11' 0"  
3.35M

7' 2"  
2.18M

4' 1"  
1.24M

ENTRY

EXHIBITION INSTALLATION: PETER NOEYER





